

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-02 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-20 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DLOS-09 AGRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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TAGS: AFSP TGEN VE

SUBJECT: SCIENCE ATTACHE PROGRAM AND GLOBAL ISSUES

REF: STATE 118666

SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY HAS IDENTIFIED SIX SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GLOBAL ISSUES WHICH APPEAR TO WARRANT PRIORITY ATTENTION AND CONSIDERS ITS PRESENT STAFF TO BE ADEQUATE TO HANDLE THE S&T ASPECTS OF THESE ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. REVIEWING THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GLOBAL ISSUES LISTED IN THE REFTEL, THE EMBASSY HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING AS REQUIRING PRIORITY ATTENTION IN THE VENEZUELAN CONTEXT:

A. NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGY - VENEZUELA IS AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF U.S. EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY, BUT IS ALSO SHOWING INCREASING INTEREST IN DEVELOPING ITS OWN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM.

B. ENERGY TECHNOLOGY - IN ADDITION TO ITS ALREADY UNCLASSIFIED

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DEVELOPED OIL INDUSTRY, VENEZUELA POSSESSES ONE OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR DEPOSITS OF NON-CONVENTIONAL HEAVY OIL AS WELL AS LARGE GAS, COAL AND HYDROELECTRIC RESOURCES. CURRENT POLICY IS TO FAVOR GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS TO DEVELOP THESE RESOURCES OVER ARRANGEMENTS WITH PRIVATE FOREIGN CORPORATIONS.

C. FOOD TECHNOLOGY - INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON FOOD IMPORTS, THE GOV WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO BUILD AND MODERNIZE THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

D. NEW TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION OR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION--VENEZUELA IS MAKING AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE MASSIVE INVESTMENTS IN HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES AS PART OF ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, BASED ON ITS OIL REVENUES.

E. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER - WITH LITTLE TECHNOLOGY OF ITS OWN, VENEZUELA WILL CONTINUE TO ACQUIRE LARGE AMOUNTS OF FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY THROUGH A VARIETY OF CHANNELS, INCLUDING THE SELECTIVE IMMIGRATION OF SKILLED TECHNICIANS.

F. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION - THE GOV HAS TAKEN A LEADING ROLE AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA DISCUSSIONS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION.

THE S&T ASPECTS OF THE REMAINING ISSUES DO NOT APPEAR TO REQUIRE PRIORITY ATTENTION:

G. OCEANS - WHILE ACTIVE IN LAW OF THE SEA DISCUSSIONS, THE GOV'S POSITION DERIVES FROM LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE INFLUENCED STRONGLY BY SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

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H. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS WILL RECEIVE INCREASING ATTENTION BUT ARE UNLIKELY TO BECOME A PRIORITY ISSUE IN THE SHORT TERM.

I. HEALTH AND NUTRITION - VENEZUELA HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED RELATIVELY HIGH LEVELS OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION.

J. POPULATION INCREASES - VENEZUELA CONTINUES TO HAVE A HIGH POPULATION GROWTH RATE, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT DOES FORMALLY SUPPORT A FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM. AT LEAST FOR NOW, THE COUNTRY HAS THE ECONOMIC RESOURCES TO PROVIDE FOR THE BASIC NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE.

K. COMMUNICATIONS/SPACE TECHNOLOGY - VENEZUELA WILL MAKE INCREASING USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY, BUT THE S&T ASPECTS ARE UNLIKELY TO REQUIRE PRIORITY ATTENTION.

L. R&D EXPENDITURE - PRIVATE R&D IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. GOVERNMENT R&D EXPENDITURES ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE PETROLEUM SECTOR (SEE B. ABOVE), WITH MOST OF THE REMAINDER SPREAD OVER A VARIETY OF RELATIVELY SMALL BASIC RESEARCH PROJECTS.

M. ARMS TECHNOLOGY AND DISARMAMENT - VENEZUELA'S INVOLVEMENT
IN THIS ISSUE DOES NOT EXTEND TO ITS S&T ASPECTS.

N. TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TERRORISM - SAME AS M. ABOVE.

O. NARCOTICS INFORMATION SYSTEMS - SAME AS M. ABOVE.

2. THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS ITS PRESENT STAFF TO BE ADEQUATE
TO HANDLE THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ASPECTS OF THESE
ISSUES, ALTHOUGH TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE ON SPECIALIZED AREAS
MAY BE REQUIRED ON AN AD HOC BASIS. RESPONSIBILITY FOR
THESE ISSUES IS NOT LIMITED TO A SINGLE OFFICER, BUT IS
SHARED BY A NUMBER OF OFFICERS ON THE STAFF. THE
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EMBASSY'S PETROLEUM AND ENERGY OFFICER, WHO HAS HAD PREVIOUS
EXPERIENCE AS A SCIENCE OFFICER, SERVES AS THE POST'S
SCIENCE OFFICER AND HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR
MANY OF THESE ISSUES. THOSE WHICH ARE HANDLED BY
OTHER OFFICES WITHIN THE EMBASSY ARE: C.-AGRICULTURAL
ATTACHE; E., E., H. AND K.- COMMERCIAL SECTION TOGETHER
WITH THE SCIENCE OFFICER; G., M. AND N.- POLITICAL SECTION;
J.- LABOR/POPULATION OFFICER; AND O.-DRUG ENFORCEMENT
AGENCY.
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